STREET SPIRIT

Justice News & Homeless Blues in the Bay Area
1995–2023 Volume 29, No. 6
A publication of Youth Spirit Artworks

STREET SHEET

INDEPENDENTLY PUBLISHED BY THE COALITION ON HOMELESSNESS SINCE 1989

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art by Linnea Kingbird-Martini

INTRODUCING THIS ISSUE

This issue is the first of its kind. It is a collaboration between two street newspapers—the Street Sheet in San Francisco and the Street Spirit in Berkeley—and the Sogorea Te Land Trust, an urban Indigenous women-led land trust based in the San Francisco Bay Area that facilitates the return of Indigenous land to Indigenous people. Within these pages you'll find stories of displacement and struggle, calls to action, and dreams of a future where decolonization is not merely a metaphor,but instead, a real return of land to those who have always called this place home

As we fight for safe and permanent housing for all people, we also grapple with what that means on stolen land. The United States is a genocidal project, one built on the colonization of land and people. Colonial capitalism has meant the destruction of cultures, of ecosystems, of lives, all for the sake of profit, and it continues today. Homelessness, too, is born of capitalism, and the idea that housing, like land, is a commodity to be hoarded and owned by those with wealth. In this way, we see the liberation of homeless people to be entwined with the decolonization of these lands.

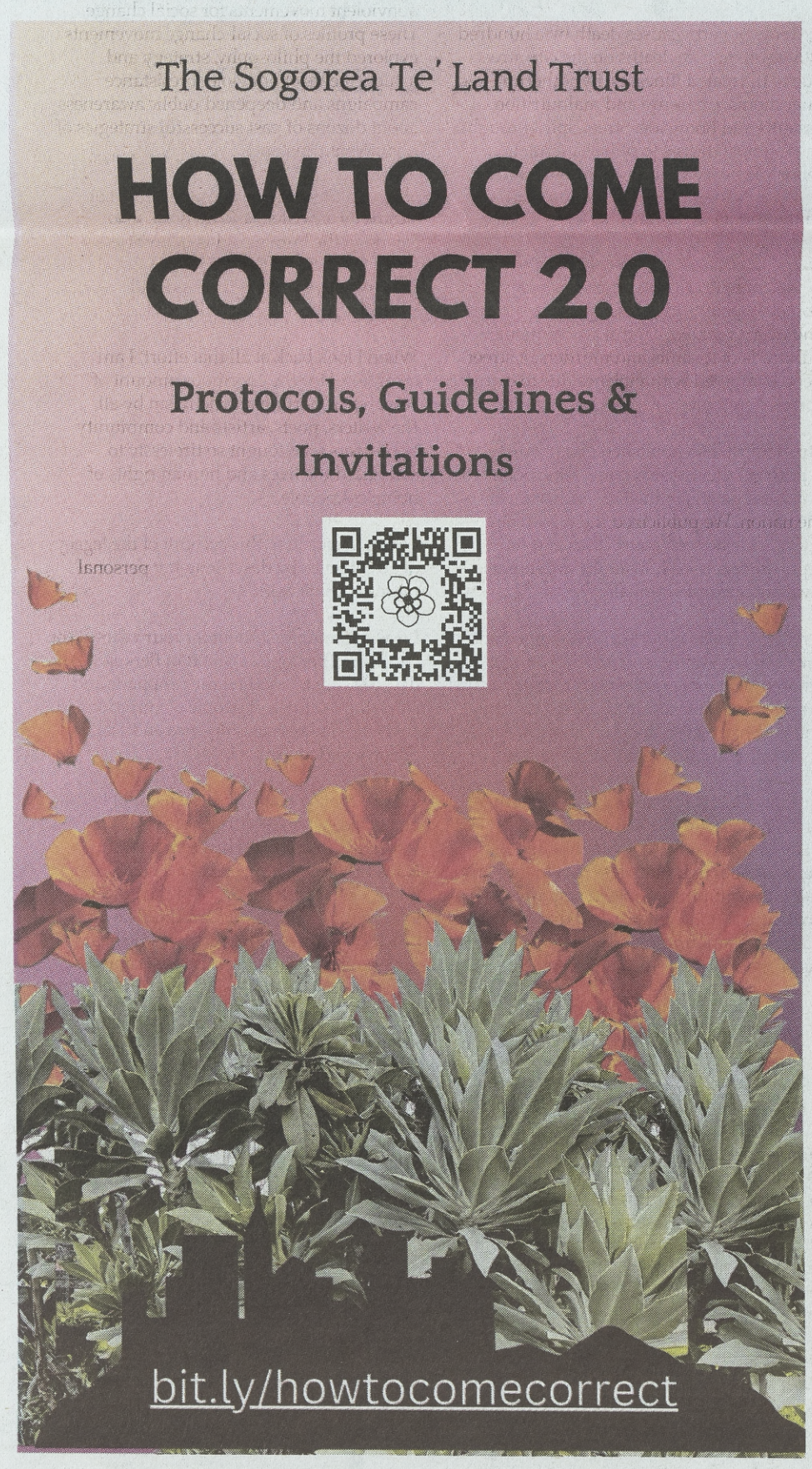
For this issue, we asked writers and artists to reflect on what it means to struggle and survive on stolen land, and for visions of what it would look like to live in reciprocity with Indigenous lands. In these pages, you'll find poetry, personal stories, and artwork depicting the hardships imposed by colonization, as well as envisioning a liberated and decolonized future. We hope you enjoy this issue, and as you do, we invite you to reflect on your relationship to this land and how it might evolve to honor the original peoples of this place.

"Two hundred fifty years ago, there was no concept of homelessness or hunger in this territory, today we are homeless in our own homeland"

–Corrina Gould, Confederated Villages of Lisjan Nation & Co-Founder, Sogorea Te Land Trust

Before colonization and before land became something that was owned, the Bay Area was a place of shared abundance. There was no such thing as private property and there was no such thing as homelessness.

Indigenous people are still here, still struggling and surviving, still experiencing disproportionate displacement, houselessness, violence and precarity.



SOGOREA TE' LAND TRUST

Sogorea Te Land Trust is an urban Indigenous women-led land trust based in the San Francisco Bay Area that facilitates the return of Indigenous land to Indigenous people.

Through the practices of rematriation, cultural revitalization, and land restoration, Sogorea Te' calls on Native and non-native peoples to heal and transform the legacies of colonization, genocide, and patriarchy and to do the work our ancestors and future generations are calling us to do.

We envision a Bay Area in which Ohlone language and ceremony are an active, thriving part of the cultural landscape, where Ohlone place names and history is known and recognized and where intertribal Indigenous communities have affordable housing, social services, cultural centers and land to live, work and pray on.

THANK YOU TO OUR CONTRIBUTORS FOR THIS ISSUE

HUGE thank you to Inés Ixierda of Sogorea Te' Land Trust for your guidance and input on this issue.

Contibutors to this issue include: Tiny, Israel Muñoz and Amir of DeeColonize Academy and Homefulness Project, Terry Johnson, Ava Cameron, India Price, Alej, Jason Hannan, Tatiana Lyulkin, Jocelyn Radeny, Arcenia Macedo Sixto, Linnea Kingbird-Martini

Copyeditors include: Kaveh Waddell, Fia Zhang Swanson, Zack Walsh, Otis Lerer

STREET SHEET

The Street Sheet is a publication of the Coalition on Homelessness. Some stories are collectively written, and some stories have individual authors. But whoever sets fingers to keyboard, all stories are formed by the collective work of dozens of volunteers, and our outreach to hundreds of homeless people.

Editor: Quiver Watts
Assistant Editor: TJ Johnston
Vendor Coordinator: Emmett House

Street Sheet is published and distributed on the unceded ancestral homeland of the Ramaytush Ohlone peoples. We recognize and honor the ongoing presence and stewardship of the original people of this land. We recognize that homelessness can not truly be ended until this land is returned to its original stewards.

STREET SPIRIT

Street Spirit is a monthly newspaper that is sold by homeless people in Berkeley and Oakland. It is written by and for unhoused people as well as their advocates. We report rigorously on the politics and policies that impact our community, and publish personal essays, profiles, and poetry. Our mission is to provide economic opportunity for our homeless neighbors while also creating a platform where they can share their own stories.

Editor in Chief: Alastair Boone
Vendor Coordinator: JC Orton
UC Berkeley MSW Intern: Annabelle Cole

A publication of Youth Spirit Artworks

The End of an Era for Street Spirit

by Alastair Boone

After nearly 28 years of uplifting the voices and stories of homeless people in the East Bay, this may be our last issue. Youth Spirit Artworks, our publisher of the last six years, has announced that they can no longer afford to support Street Spirit. The last issue—at least for now—will come out on June 1 and be distributed throughout the month.

Starting in July, Street Spirit vendors will begin selling Street Sheet (San Francisco's street newspaper). You will see the vendors you have come to know outside East Bay grocery stores, farmer's markets, and cafes—they'll just be selling a different publication. I hope you buy it. Street Sheet is amazing, and we are extraordinarily grateful to the Coalition on Homelessness, their publisher, for stepping in to help provide a resource for our vendors to sell while we try to sort out what's next.

It is an apt coincidence that this June issue is a collaboration with Street Sheet and the Sogorea Te' Land Trust. We started working on "Homeless on Stolen Land" long before I learned that we had lost our funding, but it feels especially fitting now. I hope this issue helps guide the transition into this new era.

I have learned so much from this newspaper. For one, I learned that a thing—an inanimate object like a newspaper—can become a place. It happens like this: Our vendors come into our office to pick up copies of Street Spirit and maybe have a cup of coffee, then they go out onto the street and talk to people as they sell papers. That is the ritual through which, somehow, a place is created of newsprint. Like a city within a city, Street Spirit has become a place of connection and care at the center of a human rights crisis that threatens to swallow our communities.

This paper is a living thing with a legacy of immense community support. We have been so honored by your readership and belief in our project. As we work to pave the way to the future of this critical East Bay voice, we invite you to help. If you want to host a fundraising event, contribute supportive artwork, post about our work on social media, pitch ideas about who our new publisher might be, or otherwise get involved in the effort to relaunch Street Spirit, get in touch. We are available by email at streetspiritnews@gmail.com.

The future of Street Spirit will also rely on the financial support of our readers and community members. If you are able, please consider making a generous donation to help us continue our work. Our current goal is to raise $200,000 or more to cover the first year's budget and other associated expenses. You can send donations through our new fiscal sponsor: Western Regional Advocacy Project (WRAP), an amazing advocacy organization based in San Francisco whose director Paul Boden helped us get our start back in the 1990s. WRAP accepts tax-deductible donations online and through the mail. If you are writing a check, make sure to indicate that the money is intended for our project by writing "Street Spirit" on the memo line.

Checks can be sent to:
Western Regional Advocacy Project
2940 16th Street
200-2 San Francisco CA 94103

If you are giving online, go to tinyurl.com/SAVESTREETSPIRIT and write "Street Spirit" in the box at the bottom of the page that says "If you have a special purpose for your donation, please let us know."

Take care. We trust that we will be back soon. ■

Reflections On The Legacy Of Street Spirit

by Terry Messman

Street Spirit first took flight in the spring of 1995, and for the past 28 years, it has been sold by homeless vendors in Berkeley and Oakland every month without fail, urgently warning the public of the crushing weight of poverty in America, and speaking out against the inhumanity that consigns countless human beings to the dead-end streets of homelessness, illness, deprivation, and, all too often, early death.

Each new spring always brings back my memories of Street Spirit's very first spring in March of 1995. During the past 28 years, poverty has grown into a nationwide scandal and homelessness has escalated every year in nearly every region of the country.

Municipal officials criminalize and banish the homeless poor with human rights violations and de facto segregation decrees that would not be tolerated against any other minority in our society. Even after the pandemic showed us the life-and-death stakes of homelessness in our society, there still is no concerted nationwide strategy to end this calamity.

At the heart of this massive social injustice is a catastrophic lack of empathy, a callous refusal to care about the suffering of people living on the streets, a nearly complete failure to realize that they are our brothers and sisters.

"Brothers and sisters." That may sound like a half-forgotten remnant of the counterculture of the 1960s. But if it is a relic, it traces all the way back to the visionary poetry of William Blake.

In "On Another's Sorrow," written in 1789, the English poet asked the question that Americans must now ask one another.
"Can I see another's woe,
And not be in sorrow too?
Can I see another's grief,
And not seek for kind relief?
Can I see a falling tear,
And not feel my sorrow's share?"

Blake describes how conscience and compassion are born in our inner feelings of sorrow at seeing "another's woe." Yet his poem goes one step beyond empathy. Caring about others must move us to take action, and find a "kind relief" for their suffering and sorrow.

Ever since homelessness began escalating to its current tidal level, U.S. politicians have gambled successfully that people would turn away from compassion and social justice and become more stone-hearted and cynical as the years of injustice pass by.

Instead of seeing homeless Americans as part of the human family, there has been a systematic effort to banish and criminalize the poorest citizens.

Street Spirit was created to directly confront the repressive attempts by political officials to persecute homeless people. Street Spirit writers were outspoken in fighting these massive human rights violations, and resisting the discriminatory anti-poor laws enacted across the nation.

William Blake challenged the same forces of oppression and persecution in his day. Blake's insight that life is sacred led him to condemn the poverty that lays waste to life. In Auguries of Innocence, Blake wrote:
"The Beggars Rags fluttering in Air
Does to Rags the Heavens tear."

It is a stunning and prophetic image: When our society lets human beings suffer in poverty and rags, it tears the very heavens into rags! In other words, injustice is not only felt on our streets and in our cities. It is felt all the way up to the halls of heaven.

Blake added a terrible prophetic warning about the eventual fate of any society that refuses compassion and justice to those in need.
"A dog starved at his master's gate
predicts the ruin of the State."
In "Holy Thursday," Blake condemns a wealthy society for creating "a land of poverty." Blake paints a shattering picture of "Babes reduced to misery, Fed with cold and usurious hand." (The hands of the bankers, landlords and the governing elite.)

In Blake's chilling vision, it is "eternal winter" for the children of the poor, an especially indefensible lack of humanity in a wealthy country. He contrasts the winter of injustice with a utopian vision of a land where children are never hungry, nor diminished by poverty.

Street Spirit was founded precisely to speak out in resistance to this eternal winter of injustice. Reporters for Street Spirit have authored front-line dispatches from the little-known byways and back alleys of poverty seldom visited by the mainstream media. Our writers reported from slum hotels, emergency shelters, welfare offices, psychiatric wards, tough streets, homeless encampments, and hundreds of hard-fought protests against police raids that have constantly criminalized the poor.

Looking back over the years, the most shocking aspect of the story of homelessness in America is the enormous death toll caused by poverty.

Extreme poverty causes death by a hundred blows: premature deaths on the city streets due to untreated illnesses, hypothermia and pneumonia, exposure and malnutrition, assaults and homicide. Street Spirit brought these unjust deaths to public attention, reporting every year on countless homeless memorials for those who died prematurely on the streets.

Street Spirit also investigated the epidemic of violent hate crimes committed against homeless people in cities across the nation, and every year, we carefully documented hundreds of assaults and murders of street people targeted with violence due to extreme societal prejudice.

Street Spirit also published eye-opening reports on the massive criminalization of homeless people in the Bay Area and across the nation. We publicized the research of attorneys who won court cases and our reporting exposed how many anti-homeless laws are unconstitutional.

Street Spirit also reported on an important social change movement almost completely ignored by the mainstream press: the parallel campaigns by physically disabled persons and psychiatric survivors for dignity and justice.

East Bay Hospital, a notoriously abusive psychiatric facility in Richmond, had a 12-year track record of violating the rights of poor and homeless psychiatric patients, confining people in restraints for unjustifiably long periods and dispensing staggering amounts of antipsychotic drugs in the absence of meaningful therapy.

For years, the mainstream press failed to report on those scandalous conditions, including the deaths of several patients. But when Street Spirit's investigative reporting documented the terrible mistreatment of low-income psychiatric clients, a nonviolent campaign was launched that shut down East Bay Hospital, the largest psychiatric facility in Contra Costa County and one of very few in the nation ever closed due to public outcry. Many forms of politically engaged journalism have arisen to fight social injustices in the course of U.S. history: the radical pamphlets by Thomas Paine that helped build resistance to British rule; the impassioned anti-slavery journalism of abolitionist writers William Lloyd Garrison and Frederick Douglass; the muckraking reporting of Upton Sinclair that exposed inhumane conditions in the Chicago stockyards; Dorothy Day's prophetic reporting on the injustice of poverty in her Catholic Worker newspaper; and the fiery struggles against racism and the Vietnam War carried out by the underground press of the 1960s.

The street newspaper movement embraced this American legacy of advocacy journalism by encouraging homeless people and activists to write first-hand news accounts of the nearly invisible world of poverty and human rights violations that go largely unreported in the corporate press.

Street Spirit worked in partnership with many human rights groups, and our writers and photographers reported on hundreds of nonviolent protests by scores of activist groups protesting for housing and human rights, and against the criminalization of homeless people.

Members of these activist groups, in turn, not only did courageous work for human rights, but also wrote carefully researched articles for Street Spirit that exposed the unjust treatment of homeless people and poor tenants facing eviction.

Our close collaboration with nonviolent activist groups led to a major new focus of our work when Street Spirit began publishing a series of feature-length profiles and in-depth interviews with significant activists, writers and scholars involved in organizing nonviolent movements for social change. These profiles of social-change movements explored the philosophy, strategy and achievements of nonviolent resistance campaigns and deepened public awareness about dozens of past successful strategies of nonviolent resistance.

Street Spirit was a decades-long effort by hundreds of writers and activists who defended the human rights of homeless people and gave a direct voice to some of the most oppressed, marginalized and voiceless members of our society.

When I look back at all that effort, I am so grateful for the enormous amount of research, reporting and activism by all the writers, poets, artists and community organizers who fought so tirelessly to safeguard the lives and human rights of homeless people.

I want to conclude this account of the legacy of Street Spirit by describing my personal reason for this work.

I was a seminary student for four years at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley. All day and night, I studied the prophetic and inspiring writings of people of faith from all eras who had resisted injustice and war and poverty and racism.

I found that so many of these incredibly dedicated witnesses for peace and justice were directly inspired by the poet from Nazareth, Jesus, himself born a homeless child, who said: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set the oppressed free."

The New York Times famous slogan was, "All the News That's Fit to Print." Street Spirit had a very different mission and message. Its mission was, in its own humble and imperfect way, to follow the path of the poet of Nazareth and deliver good news to the poor and oppressed.
Good news to the poor. The only news that's fit to print.

And for all the writers and activists who have selflessly worked to defend the lives of their fellow citizens living in poverty on the streets, I think always of the words of the Beatitudes. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for justice." ■

RECONNECTING

AVA CAMERON

Once upon a time, my Navajo people were a proud Indigenous community living on our ancestral lands, in present day Arizona and New Mexico. For years and generations, they had lived in harmony with the land, respecting and preserving its natural resources. However, as the world around them changed, the community found itself increasingly marginalized and pushed out of its traditional lands. With no power, political support or resources to fight back, my people were finally forced to move out of the land. This was the unfortunate beginning of our journey toward generational homelessness.

Regardless of our ancestors' efforts to resist displacement, they were eventually forced to leave their homes, as government and private interests sought to exploit the land for their gain. With no other options, they were forced to leave the only home they had ever known and seek refuge in overcrowded urban areas. Areas they were totally unfamiliar with, a life they could barely afford.

This posed a whole new challenge as they struggled to adapt to their new surroundings. Many were forced to live on the streets without access to food, shelter or medical care. Others found temporary shelters in overcrowded shelters or with relatives but were often subjected to discrimination and abuse. This is what led to my experience with homelessness, and it's the worst situation ever.

However, even with these challenges, our beloved ancestors remained resilient and committed to preserving their traditional way of life. They formed new communities in the urban areas, supporting each other and working together to overcome the many obstacles they faced.

Over time, some members of our community began to organize and advocate for their rights. The Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission has been the backbone of this rebuilding as it fights to manage, protect, and conserve the Navajo Nation's natural and cultural resources for the sake of the Navajo people. The organization worked tirelessly to raise awareness about the unique challenges faced by Indigenous peoples who have been displaced from their traditional lands, and to secure funding and support for programs that could help us rebuild our lives. Through its efforts, my tribe has been able to secure funding for affordable housing, mental health services and other resources that will help us overcome these challenges. It also worked to raise awareness about the need for greater respect and recognition of Indigenous land rights and to promote policies that would ensure the protection and preservation of these lands.

As we began to rebuild, we also re-established a connection to the land. We have worked to cultivate gardens and other small plots of land and to teach our younger generations about their traditional ways of life. In doing so, we have been able to reclaim a sense of pride and identity, and to pass on our cultural traditions and values to future generations. Regardless of the many challenges we have faced, we have been able to persevere and rebuild, thanks to the strength of our cultural traditions and the support of our allies.

Today, we continue to advocate for Indigenous peoples' rights and work towards a more just and equitable society, where all people have the opportunity to live with dignity and respect. Our Indigenous community's story reminds us of the importance of preserving cultural traditions and respecting Indigenous land rights. It also highlights the resilience and strength of marginalized communities, who are often forced to overcome incredible challenges to survive and thrive.

The U.S. government, nongovernmental organizations, and everyone living in the U.S., need to join forces and come up with ways to take care of the homeless. Whether the homelessness was caused by the loss of Indigenous land or not, there should be measures put in place to curb the menace. No one should be subjected to such a terrible and disturbing experience. ■

AFFORDABLE HOUSING ON STOLEN LAND

INDIA PRICE

I grew up on stolen land. But as a Black woman in the Bay Area, primarily in the East Bay and partially in the Peninsula, I never fully understood that the land was even stolen, and that's actually where the problem began. You grow up seeing white people, wealthy people, really damn near everyone except Black people owning homes and having expensive things. And you believe that it may have always been this way, and maybe it should be this way, but there's always this unsettling undertone that you can't quite put your finger on.

Growing up poor and Black in the Bay Area is like going to an amusement park and not being able to get on any of the rides. You know that there are all of these opportunities for growth, you know the land is full of gold just like it was during the Gold Rush, but you don't have access to any of it. You've never had any access to it, but you believe that if you work hard enough you just might get a chance to have access to this land, this stolen land that belongs to seemingly everyone but you and anyone Indigenous. But you come to realize you can never work hard enough.

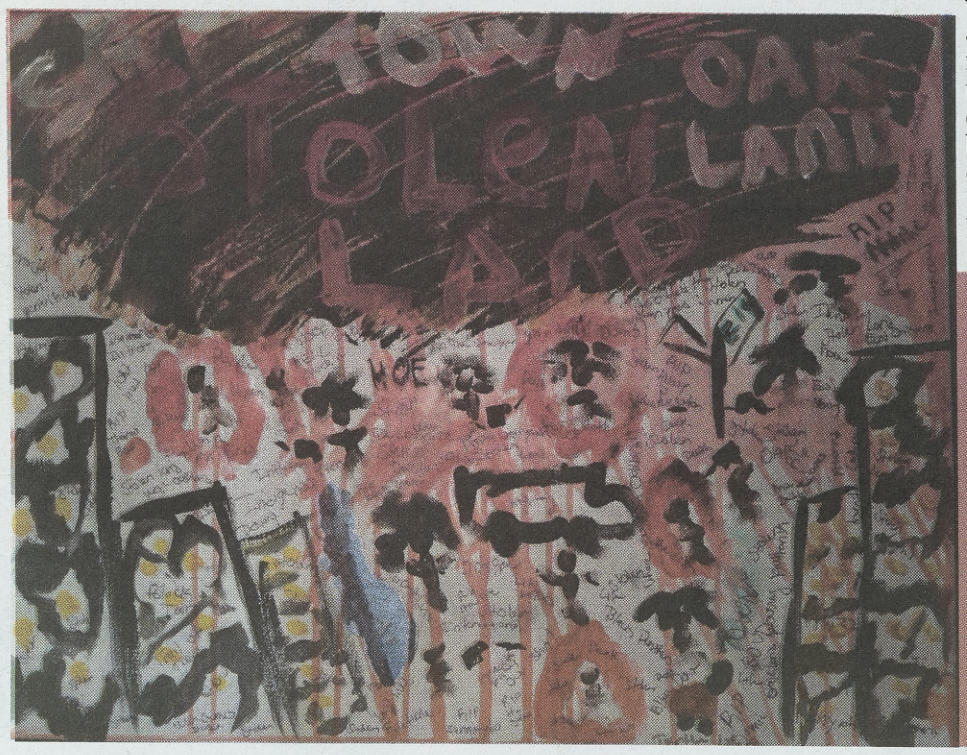
I was nine years old when I first felt the sting of houselessness. My terminally ill mother and I were living with my grandparents at the time. My grandparents had recently lost their jobs as apartment managers. My grandfather had injured his back and the company didn't want to pay worker's comp. So my grandparents not only lost their job of 10 years, but their place of residence was also gone in the blink of an eye. Being a Black man in the '90s, my grandfather had a very difficult time finding a steady income, and as a result we ended up in Hayward at a dingy Motel 6. I remember at first it felt like the world was crashing down around me. Where I once had my own space, now my mother, my grandparents and I were confined to one small room with two beds. I hated it.

Every night my grandparents would argue about how they would pay their weekly rent—and to make matters worse, I was being brutally bullied at my new elementary school. It really felt like I couldn't catch a break. There was no freedom. I felt trapped. I remember not wanting to go to school because I didn't know what to wear to make the kids stop making fun of me. I was so frustrated with life, I took a key and began scratching myself with it until my mother came in the room and immediately began going off on me.

The solace I do remember having during that period of my life came during Christmas Eve. My mom surprised me with three new Beanie Babies: a kangaroo, a penguin and a bear. At the time, Beanie Babies were the new craze, and I was just so excited to even be able to get a gift. My mother, Natalie, always had a way of pulling me out of my dark space. She always helped me see the world as bright and beautiful, even when everything around us was bleak. My mother was the pot of gold that so many of us yearn to reap out of this stolen land.

We lived in Motel 6 for close to a year, and during that very long year we overheard pimps, johns, sex workers, drug dealers and their users, lovers' quarrels—the list really does go on. Finally, my grandparents found another job as apartment managers. And my mother, after seven years of waiting on an Oakland affordable housing list, was finally awarded her very own apartment. I remember feeling so excited: I was finally going to have my own room. It seemed like the universe was finally shining down on my family and me.

And then we moved into our Oakland Housing Authority apartment in West Oakland, and it was the worst apartment I had ever seen. There was garbage piled up to our waist in the backyard, crack needles in the freezer, and I vividly remember the warm welcome my mother and I received after friends and family helped us clean the apartment of all the debris that had been left from the previous tenants: The next day, I woke up to a huge pile of human feces on our doorstep. This is what we were afforded as housing, this is what was awarded to a disabled Black woman and her daughter in Oakland. This was my experience on stolen land. Bullets flew over my head at night, and we lived in constant fear of our car being broken into. During the years we lived in the Oakland Housing Authority apartment, we witnessed extreme police brutality, street violence, domestic abuse violence and home invasions. I could keep going with the atrocities, but then I'd be writing a book chapter instead of a short article.



This piece depicts life on stolen land—specifically the Bay Area. I grew up seeing sex workers on East 14th St in Oakland. The gun violence, the cars, the indigenous presence that was overlooked by many, the wild life and the aspect of it just being a concrete jungle was part of my experience.

Looking back on these experiences, I realize I was fortunate to even have a roof over my head, especially now looking at the current rates of houselessness in the Bay Area. But as a youth, that roof often felt like a prison. There wasn't a safe space to play outside, and I don't remember there being many affordable community outlets for children and inner-city youth to participate within.

My mother pushed me as hard as she could, she gave of herself as much as she could. My mother tragically died at the early age of 37, when I was only 19 years old. She left me her lottery winnings: her Oakland Housing Authority Apartment. I remember her biggest worry before she passed away was that she hadn't left me with enough. She left me with more than what most people were left with. She left me with a place to live, and with strength.

I would go on to move out of the state to get away from the violence of West Oakland, and pursue my dreams of becoming a nurse. In my early twenties, I believed that working within the medical system could right some of the many injustices my mother faced in that same system. Now in my mid-thirties, I realize that the vision of the future that I see for this once stolen land requires more than a Black girl leaving her home and going to school to become a nurse. It also required me to tell my story, to tell my mother's story and to tell the story of so many other Black people, brown people, and Indigenous people's lives in affordable housing on stolen land.

Within my mind's eye, and hopefully very soon, I can physically envision communities of Black and other people of color working together to create a society where houselessness no longer exists. A space where over-policing is not necessary, but rather where the people police themselves, and where this adage of it taking a village comes back into play. Where there are more community centers for youths to spend their time, like the American Indian Child Resource Center where I worked as a youth. Where there are more community gardens and farms for people to learn how to grow their own food and medicine. Where there is a revised medical system, one in which a young Black woman isn't neglected to the point of her death, where her voice is valued like all people deserve. I know these ideas are a little far fetched, but it's a reality that existed long before this land was colonized, and it is my belief that through stories like mine and many others, we will rebuild this reality again. ■

JOURNEY LONGING HOME

ALEJ [THEY/THEM]

Fleeing in the middle of the night,
who are we trying to be,
a band of coyotes?
but fearfully running to
the nearest place that would
take us, accept us.
It's not that they wouldn't accept us.
If we suggested to stay,
it only determined how much
she was willing to sacrifice. . .
All in the name of me. all. for. me.
(question myself; me?)
Did you make us leave because his truth
was so erratic, striping— it tore off
this fake enamel you plastered
over your exposed steel bars— those bars,
a cage.
But a cage not occupied by greeting
mourning doves,
the confinds of the cage hold gentle, messily
dismembered bodies holding feathers; left with one
life in an eye.
Scab and scab again. Trying to
heal but struck again before
your cells, your soldiers could gain their strength,
build themselves back up
again.
To knowingly be prepared
for the next hardship,
likely the same hand
again.
Yet that hand
hasn't been a hand in
vastly 25 years,

He's dead.

you're safe,

go home.

But, remind me
again.

where is
your home.

Where is MY home?

Did you take mine,
because they took yours ?
well, I've changed the key.

You can walk yourself home,
maybe to another's (to borrow)

Because you will not
assume control over
~~my body~~ my home.
You can live through and fight
your own problems.

I was born from an opening
where a river spilled from, a person.

You've taken me far beyond the river,
I've built a boat with what I have left,
and I'll paddle until I see where the
sky and the sea kiss and bear the teeth of land and trees.

Smiling back at me.
to give me the gift of a welcome to home.

STANDING ON ROCKS WITH FISTS

original storypoem w/ accompanied collage art by Jason Hannan

On cusp dusky twilight, periwinkle wide - breaching highest cotton edge, our souls touched.

Tasked selling the Epic Triathloniversary, 45th & not in merchandise mood. I hadn't been since the indigenous occupants' diffusing back to their land after stand together.

I heard the Muscogee hymn from Trail of Tears throughout the moon phases & couldn't cease it. Rattled me like birth.

Nak O'mvl-kv-ha-hi-cv-tet
{He has created all things}

Souix , Creek...

Showing tribes' colors, so many. So bright.

Every 1 m'visitors welcomed, or imposed, must see the prison island.

Up, down, within.

Touring guests to hellspot where once dwelled 3 escapees* / prospective free men? As an empath, this stage so gruesome be.

He-sa-ke-tv
{God lives}

Pomo , Paiute...

Split my neck as the stench of Diambiguites met us as we docked at the guard gate. Ahoy! Triathalon to Alcataz featured the not usual tests:

Running, Swimming, Cycling.

Was I mad?

These ferry tickets to jail mountain, spent from her purse. I infer to align her self-righteous ° self gratification ° of the sort typical of rich white women her age.

She'll pay smiling sighing out a term mistaken & waaay off.

Or going so.

"You've only been off the streets a few months." Smirking her eyes narrowhead-ed. Missing the target.

"18." I say.
Insisting then she'd treat me until,
"You find a job."
'12 months', I know but do not say.

Macabre nostalgia consumes my spirit each time, horror as I see the silloutes - painted weapon-shaped, behind the cooking weapons. Each meant to show unhung. Missing.

Deadly.

"Ooooh. That big, fat, squareish one!", cooed loudly pointing towards them.

"That would do the trick!", echoing even through solitary's walls.

'She may have well be a Chef in this kitchen', I thought. 'Prep meaty snacks for the ghosts & the forces who don't forgive.'

"Clever," I sighed.

Em pen-ka-lit, Me-kus-sa-pis
{I pray with fear of respect}

Mono, Navajo

I had've been the one to prance with in-law. Felt trapped, as she revelled in the men having freedom withheldback in mountain-heavy rates.

: Sharin, it seems, enjoys the highest stakes of ill favor.

Running, Swimming, Cycling...

& The Legends 3!

*[likely hitched the ferry back on the stress of guards - the ratted seacraft to throw the scent of the hunted]

Cv Cuk-wvm es A'kv-sa-mis
{I glorify him with my mouth}

Not swimming, but chanting a song with no backstrokes, from salt sky - not to beat the highest score, must'stay on course on very nature's flow.

Em V'ha-kv pu-mva-yat
{He gives us his teaching}

Stark seeing all water parts the same, whether at peak or base flat'ed on skigees.

Nak hot-cen hah-yet pu 'mv-tes
{He gives us what is in writing}

& saw the truth - 2 oxygen + 1 Hydrogen, if each we all - equal.

Not Running, but hunting. The styled grease on warrior's arm vibrating a songstring to pull back, aim at the devil's eye - chanting song of mercy.

Mohawk , Chippewah...

Mv-ha-kv Me-hen-wut o'mes
{His teachings are the truth}

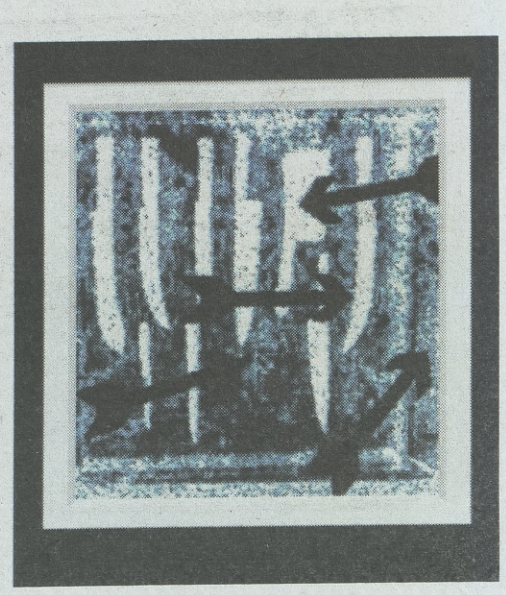
Not cycling, but praying at a rhythm of harmony. Sharin wasted her meal & I lost mine as they airlifted me out. I had looked again at 'weapon' wall & blacked out.

Black Foot...bare.

Cv-fe-ken es A'kv-sa-mis
{I glorify him with my heart}

Sight flooded with thousand arrow silhouettes of all tribes.

As looked below, rock growing small to dim, I winced unheard - "treaty is no thing to make but with God."



art by Linnea Kingbird-Martini

DECOLONIZING HOMELESSNESS

by Tiny, daughter of Dee, povertyskola co-founder & visionary of Homefulness

Reprinted from POOR Magazine https://www.poormagazine.org/post/decolonizing-homelessness

DECOLONIZING OR DYING?

I mean how can we talk about just transfers
and still b owning her while she b desecrated and yet we keep buying and selling and buying
Mama earth is who I speak of
Our great mama who like our mamas we only have one of
Her purchase
Your profit
Leads to all these violent Evictions and sweeps that got us poor peoples dying
From WinnaMucca to Wood Street to around the corner from 1st nations elders to grandmamas like Iris Canadá and Elaine Turner
Buying selling renting and dwelling -if u po u lucky if u win the real esnakke monopoly end up housed instead of at the mercy of scamlords, poLice and more jailing
If u worked all yo life to own yo spot -I ain't mad at ya -it's all we been taught
Sold and told it's what we shud attain jus to b safe in a krapitalist pyramid game that keeps poor people in chains breaking poor peoples backs grown on poor peoples labor and intentional poverty by the ongoing lie of private property
Would u sell yo own mama ?
Would u put her on the auction block
Would u evict and sweep
So u never have to see
How much she got robbed, thawed, and bought
What's the answer ?
Clarifying the problem
It's a complete stop to same ole same ole process
Stop the Wealth hoarders so they can't steal and profit
And tell the Philanthro-pimps don't dole out yo blood-stained dollars
Cuz they stop exchanging mama earth on the market
Begins by questioning all you have bought
All you have been sold and all u have been taught
Fight for 1st Nations and Black land BACK
Fight for no more hygenic metaphors about the poor
Question the multiple lies of rent
The scamlord and the poverty pimp
The ones you pay to keep a roof
The one Who gets paid to Help you while seeing your struggle as moot
Fight for her -
Your mama -
our mama - our Mama Earth
fight for her so we all stop this hurt

DECOLONIZING HOMELESSNESS

"A lot of us elders, disabled elders, who have been here for decades have been evicted and are now homeless," said Jim Ayer one of many life-long 1st Nations residents of the Winnemucca Indian Colony which was established by the US settler government in 1917 for 'homeless indians.'

The Winnemucca tragedy, which ended in the eviction of scores of long-time elder indigenous residents, is sickeningly ironic as the so-called colony is on land already stolen from First Nations peoples to make them 'homeless' in the first place, and now in the 21st century, indigenous peoples from Turtle Island in many settler towns make up the majority of the unhoused population in their community.

"Two hundred years ago, before colonization, there wasn't even a concept of homelessness," said Corrina Gould, talking chief and spokesperson of the confederated villages of Lisjan Ohlone and co-founder of the Sogorea Te Land Trust, at a powerful shellmound to shellmound walk from the over 5,000 year old shellmound in West Berkeley to the centuries old shellmound in Emeryville which the settlers and CorpRapeshuns turned into a mall.

Poverty has been a consumer product of krapitalism since the settlers first came here. As a matter of fact, poverty and disability was a crime in all the countries the settlers came from.

SO WHERE DID HOMELESSNESS COME FROM?

The origins of homelessness are not because of lack of rent control, redlining, violence, trauma or profiling, ableism, racism, eviction and gentriFUKation, as many 21st century researchers will tell you. Those are most definitely what has catapulted homelessness to terrifying epidemic levels. But these are not its roots, and homelessness as we now experience it could not have taken hold had it not been for the original theft of Turtle Island, implementation of the deep Settler lie of private property to launch the real eSnake speculative industry, and a multitude of extractive industries set up because of that original theft for profit, extraction and colonization.

"I've been staying under the 101 offramp on and off for the last five years and then one day, they came and took all my belongings and threatened me with with guns if I didn't leave," said Rogelio G, an elder migrante houseless relative from Michoacan, Mexico, now residing houseless in San Francisco.

Clearly describing the colonial origins of homelessness enables us to clarify what we are fighting against and fighting for, while we recognize the violence of homelessness, including death from exposure, sweeps and poLice terror. The criminal acts—called sweeps—against houseless people's bodies are increasing from Seattle to San Francisco and they are directly tied to the commodification and decolonization of Mama Earth.

Settler politricksters want us to be confused so we don't question, upset and resist the original crime. So we don't all recognize our deep connections to each other's struggles as houseless people, Black, Brown, Indigenous, migrante and even po' Wites—people I call broken settlers.

Instead, we demand land from systems put in place by the settler government that will never give us land because it was taken for the sole purpose of profit. We demand actual affordable housing, which will never happen because then no one would make money off that housing. We demand to not be poLiced and incarcerated for sitting, standing, walking, sleeping on Mama Earth without paying ground rent, which will never happen because we are taking up space without paying for it, and therefore no one is making any money on the spaces we inhabit—not to mention our mere presence "lowering property values" as we poor people are told by scamlords, realEsnakes and racist, classist neighbors all the time.

So as we resist the onslaught of violent criminalization and sweeps against our unhoused bodies all across this occupied land, we need to incorporate the larger demand of decolonization. It's not enough to fight against criminalization, we need to fight against the settler lie of ownership of mama earth itself.

OWNERSHIP OF MAMA EARTH IS A LIE

Well technically it's not a lie, because ownership of mama earth happens everyday, everywhere, and in occupied Turtle Island (aka the U.S.) it is the most "solid" krapitalist investment there is, as reported by ekkkonomists constantly. But all indigenous peoples and ancestors across Mama Earth will tell you Mama Earth has never been, is not now, and never will be for sale. Selling, renting, profiting and extracting from her and off of her is the roots of most colonial terror we deal with today, including poLice terror, gentriFUKation, displacement and eviction violence, and of course the endless laws created to criminalize poor and disabled people from being alive on her without paying money to someone, AKA rent.

The settler colonial narrative of ownership began way back with the feudal societies creating papers and documents asserting that they owned indigenous people's lands of origin in Europe, launching the idea of the landed gentry—the roots of gentriFUkation—and then suddenly charging people rent for the lands they had peacefully stewarded for centuries. This led to massive evictions and huge and deadly exoduses by displaced people.

Centuries later, this genocidal style of land removal and land theft was being carried out across the ocean as the same wealthy slave and land-owner class came here to suddenly "own" Turtle Island. It was also continuing back in Europe. One of the most famous examples was the wrongly named potato famine. It should have been called the scamlord famine because what is rarely talked about is it led to the eviction of literally hundreds of thousands of indigenous peoples from their lands. At those times, just like now, it mattered not if you were an elder, disabled, sick or a child, if you were in the way of profiting off of rent you were evicted. Period. Thrown on the street with the clear knowledge you might die. Historians and others have long debated the exact number of people who were evicted during these famine years, with some estimates suggesting between 250,000 and 500,000 families were removed.

The famine evictions were actually part of the second wave of deadly evictions—preceded by Pauper laws, which of course were the precursor for the anti-poor people and anti-houseless people laws we have today in the United Snakes. Famine era evictions occurred in four great waves. Firstly, following the introduction of the Irish Poor Law Act in 1838, landlords began to remove tenants, ushering them to the newly created workhouse system where they were somebody else's problem.

And then of course all these lies—I mean laws—led to the Ugly Laws and the criminalization of being disabled and poor in public, which was just another way to profit off of poor people's bodies by throwing them in jail or settlement houses—early forms of shelters which were supported by the settler governments again.

THE PUBLIC RELATIONS PROJECT CALLED PARKS

At the turn of the century, as concerns about the impacts of development grew and illegal land use by corporations expanded, a new idea emerged. A number of leaders including President Theodore Roosevelt, naturalist John Muir, and Gifford Pinchot, the fourth first chief of the U.S. Forest Service, began to advocate for some of the lands

continues on page 11...

ON NATIVE GROUND

TATIANA LYULKIN

Nobody owns the sunrise,
The air we breathe,
The ground
Where we plant
And nurture our seeds.
The ones
Who were here before us
Believed so.
You can't buy a waterfall,
A mountain meadow
Where the yellow
And blue flowers bloom.

Nobody owns
A quiet country road,
A giant seagull
That flies overhead
As the tide comes in,
You can't buy
Fresh morning air,
Being lost in the woods,
A sense of purpose,
Of belonging,
That perfect moment of peace.

You can't stop a river
From flowing,
The snow from falling,
The ones
Who were here before us
Said so.
You can't stop people
From smiling
Or falling in love.

Nobody owns the sunset,
That special time
When the bright orange disk
Disappears beyond the horizon
And the sky
And the sea
Become one.
We don't own the land,
The oceans, the trees-
We are the stewards,
The students,
The teachers,
The guides.
We are the children
Of those who were here
Before we came.

RECLAIM THE LAND

JOCELYN RADENY

Homelessness has become one of the biggest menaces that has hit quite a good number in the USA. What most of us do not know is that one of the causes of homelessness is privatization of Indigenous land. Years back, people would live in places of their choice without having to worry about human displacement or eviction. Many places in America have been home to different Native Nations over time. However, many Indigenous people no longer live on lands to which they have ancestral ties. They have been forced to move, making space for greedy and selfish private developers who are only concerned with making their lives better. Indigenous land that could be beneficial to generations and generations is now owned by a few.

Skyscrapers, industries and private offices stand on land that could have been used for government projects to house the huge number of homeless people who have nowhere to go. There are people that call the shots inside the government, one way or the other, and trying to go against their word leads to serious repercussions. Court cases against land-grabs generally find against the common citizen, or take so long that those fighting back become frustrated and tired. This is a clear indication that the legal system has also been compromised. It does not have the common citizen's interest at heart anymore, but is focused rather on what brings money to the pockets of those in power.

It's so sad that as a country, we do not have leaders who can fight for the sake of suffering people without being compromised. These resettlements from Indigenous land were organized by people with the mindset of extracting resources, with an aim of making the rich richer. Money has proved to be the No. 1 influential factor in matters that involve important decision-making, favoring the rich few. Indigenous land on which we could build cheap housing and healthcare institutions for almost every American citizen is now owned and managed by a few rich souls, while the proceeds benefit only them. This is very evident by the number of homeless people on the streets of American cities currently, and the number is still on the rise. Who will help us, as people who lost their land? Land that should be housing and feeding us and our descendants for generations.

The effects of these selfish acts have been felt over the years, and like a domino effect it has grown, up to this moment. Trauma and sad reality hits us every morning. A wave of bitterness every time we read the history of our ancestors. The reality of the large areas of land that were owned by our ancestors until they were violently chased out, some at gunpoint. Take a visit even to the rural areas of some states and you'll find individuals who possess large acres of land. Yes, some may be inherited, but you'll find quite a number that people were evicted from with little or no compensation at all.

The big question is, what can be done to at least try to resolve this enormous issue? My thoughts are, The American government needs to come up with a plan to identify the descendants of those chased out of their Indigenous lands and compensate us fairly with reparations. This will definitely help provide homes to a good number of the homeless people on the streets. The government should also work on reclaiming some of the land acquired forcefully, and develop government projects that are aimed at housing the homeless. I believe that, putting into consideration the resources at the government's disposal, we should not have people on the streets. We should not be sleeping in the cold, hungry. ■

HOMEFULNESS IS LIKE HEAVEN

AMIR, DECOLONIZE ACADEMY

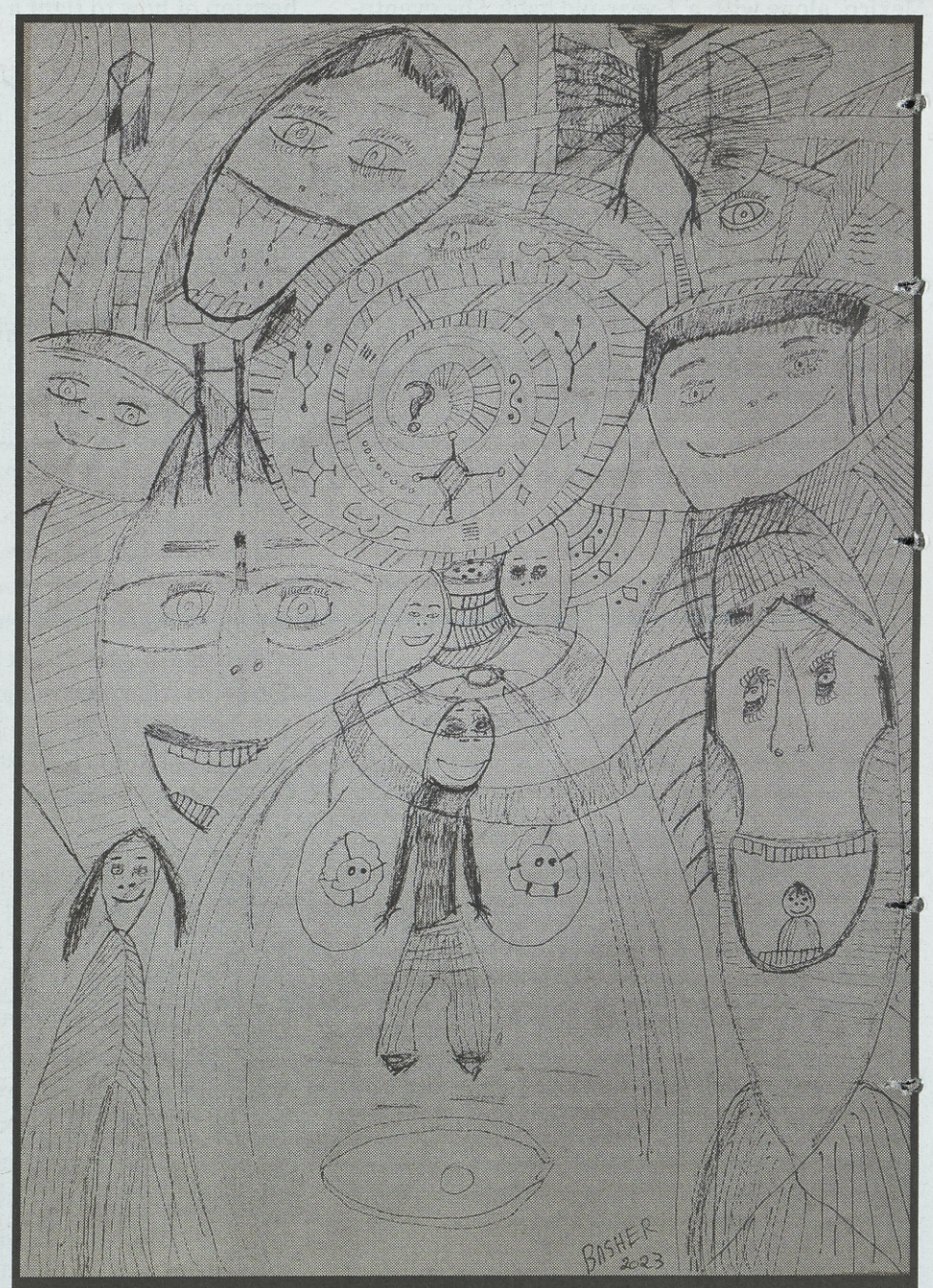
Homefulness is a community launched by Dee and Tiny Garcia. Homefulness is a safe place for people of color that could join us in the movement to free Mama Earth along with all of our Po Uncles, Aunties, Grandmas and Grandpas. I study at Deecolonize Academy - a school at Homefulness in East Oakland.

Homefulness is a place that helps our fellow houseless relatives on the streets. We give out food to see their smiles. They also have their own radio show led by youth skolaz and adult skolaz. Also we support our people in the streets.

Homefulness is not just a place, it's much more than a place- it's like heaven. We save lives during this pandemic, we always help our community and never stop, always help the poor. Homefulness is a place where you can feel safe.

Homefulness is different from the other schools. It is led by our community from the streets. They are also teaching the young ones how to take care of the elders in our community. Homefulness teaches so many things that are different from the regular schools.

Homefulness is a special space for all of us and this community fights the cruel injustice on our people. We are not a fake organization. We are the real deal, and we are always showing up and supporting anyone who needs our help. ■



"Processing Homelessness" by Lewis Basher
Submitted through the Hospitality House Community Art Program

TRANSFORMATION/ TRANSFORMACION

HOMEFULNESS RESIDENT/FORMERLY HOMELESS POVERTY SCHOLAR: ISRAEL MUÑOZ

(Espanol/Spanish)

Hoy, como todos, sigo con la lucha de cada día. Dejar el alcohol y con la ayuda de la gente que tuve la suerte de conocer a través de otra persona. Una persona con la que tuve el honor de compartir y aprender cosas que no se enseñan en la escuela, y compartimos emociones. Felices momentos especiales, y me enseñaron a retirarme de las mentiras que nos dicen y nos hacen creer sobre este país.

Y así es como conocí a sus amistades que hasta hoy me apoyan y me enseñaron a ser diferente cuando estaba en mis adicciones y en mis peores días en la calle. Sin decir nada y sin reproches, eso es lo que debe hacer la gente. Como Miguel, Lisa y los jóvenes con paciencia me dieron su energía para salir adelante, y eso vale más que el dinero. Esto es lo único que nuestra gente necesita hacer para salir de las calles. Por eso, todos los días, trato de acabar con ese mal hábito que los colonizadores trajeron a nuestras vidas. Poco a poco el alcohol nos mata y separa a nuestras familias.

Hoy los médicos solo saben dar medicina para volverte adicto, y en realidad los mejores remedios son los que nos da la madre tierra sin pedir nada a cambio. Por eso, gente ambiciosa y sin escrúpulos está explotando a la madre tierra, destruyendo todos sus riquezas naturales y abusando de ellas. No saben lo que tienen hasta que se acaba la tierra, y no tengan ni cómo sacar para sus propia adicciones, y quedan olvidados y sumergidos en sus adicciones, y sólo entonces sabrán el verdadero dolor.

(English/Ingles)

Today, like everyone, I continue struggling through each day. To quit alcohol, with the help of the people whom I had the luck of knowing through a mutual friend. This is a person I had the honor of sharing with and learning things that are not taught at school, and we share feelings. We also shared happy, extraordinary moments, and she taught me how to withdraw from the lies they tell us and make us believe about this country.

And this is how I met her friends who to this day support me and who taught me to be different than when I was in my addictions and on my worst days in the streets. Without saying anything and without reproaches, that is how people should do it. How Miguel Silencio, Tiny and the young people at Poor Magazine patiently gave me their energy to move ahead, and that is worth more than money. This is the only thing our people need to do to get off the streets. For that reason, every day, I'm trying to stop that evil habit that colonizers brought into our lives. Little by little, alcohol kills us and separates our families.

Today, doctors only know how to give medicine to make you addicted, and in reality, the best remedies are the ones that Mother Earth gives us without asking for anything in return. That is why ambitious and unscrupulous people are exploiting Mother Earth, destroying all its natural resources, and misusing them. They don't know what they have until the land runs out, and they don't have what they need for their addictions, and they remain forgotten and submerged in their addictions, and only then will they know real pain. ■

SYMBIOSIS

ARCENIA MACEDO SIXTO

The moment I was able to understand as a child that I was considered an alien in the United States, my heart broke. I wondered why my three older siblings all held those important papers that made them special.

In 1999, my mother began her treacherous journey through disadvantaged and violent towns in Mexico, alone with a 2-year-old baby. She eventually had to connect with a coyote to cross the border. But the coyotes were untrustworthy and held her hostage while I was being smuggled through the border by a young couple who pretended to be my parents. I sat in a car seat unknowingly crossing the Arizona border. Upon arrival at the nearest airport where they met my dad and siblings, we were already home: my dad's van.

Being houseless for six months living in that van was hell. I learned from my mother's testimony of it. We spent early mornings and late afternoons at the park because being in our van all day was too depressing. We washed our sleepy faces with cold water from a bucket. We slept and daydreamed in the van as my dad hustled to maintain construction jobs.

When living in a van with three children became too treacherous, we moved between three different homeless shelters in Menlo Park and East Palo Alto. The shelters provided warm food, actual beds, and hot showers. Eventually, my aunt allowed all six of us to stay in one room in her apartment in San Pablo. This story hurts because I remember as the years of unsteady housing in San Pablo dragged on, I would have lingering feelings of doom, though I hoped we would find a permanent home.

At last, we found a home in Richmond where we lived for 10 years. It had an abundant lemon tree in the backyard along with a chayote tree. Unfortunately, my parents didn't have the financial capacity to shelter my entire family comfortably.

But in 2014 my family and I were evicted, robbed of our family home. My mother's inexperience with California renters' rights left us without a home for a month and we had to stay at a relative's home. I don't blame her. I try to find closure from this wound of being evicted by stating the facts that surrounded the devastating event. It was out of my mother's control as a single mother she didn't understand English enough to advocate for herself and family. I was in high school with no comprehension of how to fight a corrupt system.

We eventually found an apartment in San Pablo and have yet to be houseless again. These terrifying struggles took emotional tolls on my family and me. Attempting to remain in the Bay Area continues to be a constant struggle because living in Richmond you must endure the Chevron Refinery plaguing your lungs and air. Finding housing in the East Bay has been difficult all my life.

Though I sometimes feel pushed out and overwhelmed with my experiences living in the Bay, I also feel grateful. The Bay has the potential to truly revolutionize the world. The Sogorea Te' Land Trust is just one example. Urban Tilth has had an immense impact on a green and hopeful future for communities of Richmond. Indigenous and Black knowledge of survival, resistance, stewardship, decolonization, and rematriation are pervaded and amplified in the Bay Area and provoke wild thoughts of living in reciprocity and symbiosis with the land.

I envision homes in the so-called Berkeley Hills with no signs preventing others from picking fruit from fruit trees growing on affluent lawns. Black Lives Matter signs on tidy yards cared for by Brown hands must stand for something by action, not by performative alliance. Blake Garden in so-called Kensington needs to be returned to the Sogorea Te' Land Trust. It is managed by UC Berkeley and it's close to all Kensington residents that have the privilege to enter sacred land that is and has always been cared for by Native people. Additionally, the privacy of the garden promotes societal hierarchy beliefs that those with an abundance of money live in neighborhoods with lush protected gardens and that such said gardens are exclusive for those residents.

Living in harmony with the land would require the dismantling of the idea of private property. Such lands would need to be maintained by Indigenous people and should be accessible to all communities of people who will value and appreciate nature. Accessibility and walkability are in unity against oppression and colonization. City landscapes should be planned in accordance with the earth and humans, not cars and roads. We need equitable transportation that will mitigate climate change. Living in reciprocity with the land would require access to public spaces such as gardens, parks, cultural centers, and most importantly access to free health care. I envision a society where Richmond and San Pablo residents can have an abundance of gardens and trees in their neighborhoods. Where free bus and shuttle services to gardens, libraries, schools, and parks in the East Bay would be a guaranteed option fostering environmental sustainability.

Most importantly, I believe to live in symbiosis with the land we must abolish the police. We must destroy and evict Chevron and big corporations that are killing us and the land. The dependency on oil must be replaced with cycling and expansive sidewalks for people with disabilities to have space to get around. Creating safer spaces in nature for all of society can be achieved by ending the toxic masculinity that exists in the "outdoor industry" along with referring to nature as such. Education should be expanded to include food sovereignty, urban planning, financial advocacy, and decolonization. I believe in the radical idea to imagine a world where we renounce our oppression and examine our plight's origins to comprehend why we are living in impoverished conditions.
I hope that the homelessness can eventually go away. I dream of the Bay Area thriving with California Native plants and an abundance of food grown locally meant to be shared with one another. I plant seeds in my mind and heart of resilience, change, and harmony. My ancestors were never "illegal" to this land. They managed to survive on stolen land under a colonizer regime. Now as a descendant of resilient Indigenous people my focus is my allegiance to the rematriation of Native land and the transformation of our relationship to the land. ■

HOMELESS ON STOLEN LAND

TINY

continued from page 8...

in the public domain to be set aside for the use and enjoyment of all people.

These settler heroes rode in with the idea of National Parkkks, the Forest Service, and the equally CONfusing lie of public land to wash their genocide, land theft, slaughter and extraction with a veneer of public good. They organized to grab massive areas of land, supposedly for the public good, but this was actually a strategy to steal even more land from indigenous peoples across Turtle Island, denying them access to their homelands and banning them from hunting, fishing, and gathering on these settlements.

The funny not funny thing about parks in today's reality is that some houseless folks hide and sleep and live in parks like me and my mama used to do, but god forbid don't get caught by the park poLice who will not only tell you to move but also call the cops, CPS, DPW, CalTrans and any other acronym state agencies on you to sweep us like we are trash.

Similarly, our comrades at the Self-Help Hunger program (SHHP) transformed a pocket park, supposed public land, into a food giveaway, love and healing space. But they were then constantly harassed for using public land for the public good as founder Auntie Frances often beautifully says.

THE VIOLENCE OF HOMELESSNESS ITSELF AND ITS CONNECTION TO COLONIZATION

Strangely, there is a misconception that movements for Black Land, First Nations Land Back, and homelessness are separate. They are actually entwined in more ways than one. In many settler towns across Turtle Island, like so-called Bellingham and Seattle, the largest population of houseless people are in fact First Nations peoples of that land. In Oakland, like in so many settler cities, the largest population of unhoused peoples are Black. And in many cities, the broken settlers—poor wite people—are also huge populations of houseless people. Our lives intersect on the street, with all of our messiness, trauma and struggle. And that is why the roots of this krapitalist disease called "ownership" must be dissected and seen and decolonized.

"Do you see that houseless mama and daughter sleeping in a tent, that's cause we don't have money for the rent?" - Povertyskola

There are many reasons we got here—not the least of which is systemic racism, wite supremacy, fake-ass skool profiling, poLice terror, abuse, domestic violence and more trauma than can fill a settler dam—but the thing in this society that brings us all together and democratizes our struggle is the inability to function within a system that puts a price tag on the Mama Earth below our feet—or our tent, to be exact. It is our inability to pay rent. Even if we lose our places because we had to flee an abusive partner, lost our job, got in a struggle with addiction, can't take the pain inside our heads, we are never able to get back in.

Supervisor Matt Haney of San Francisco just proposed new legislation that I thought was interesting. He proposed we cap the security deposit that scamlords charge at the equivalent of one month's rent. As it is now, scamlords can charge prospective tenants 3 or more month's rent just to get inside. Not to mention the credit score check and job requirements that no one low to no-income or houseless can ever attain. But the oddest thing to me was that the example given in the report was a $5,000 per month 2 bedroom apartment. Who can afford $5,000 per month in the first place, even if we only have to pay one month's rent deposit?

Back in the day when me and mama were houseless, she would insist that my 12-year-old self would don the rent starter suit and leverage my skin privilege to lie to scamlords about my job, credit, age and ability to pay exorbitant rents. Racism is alive and well in the United Snakkkes so they would often believe me instead of my single, disabled mama of color, when I said I made ridiculous sums of money and had all kinds of credit. The sad part is within months no matter how hard we worked we couldn't keep up the rent. We worked really hard all the time at a micro-business, and the rent at that time was between $800-1100 per month for studios and one bedrooms in Oakland and San Francisco.

In the end, we always landed outside. Again.

OWNERSHIP IS NOT YOUR TICKET OUT OF POVERTY

In the process of decolonizing our minds from ownership, there remains the reality that ownership is told and sold to poor people as the way to make it out of grinding poverty. We are sent to workshops and bombarded with ads about how buying is surviving. I know this is true and I ain't hating no one that got their little piece of Mama Earth. But I also know that the system is set up to steal poor peoples land and homes. This is the story of Brokin Cloud, an afro-indigenous elder who was on the street for 15 years after his aunty lost the house she worked her whole life to buy, behind an unpaid tax lien. His and his aunty's spirits were destroyed by all that and he was called service resistant by anti–social workers and case manglers. He is now finally home-FULL, in his rent-free home at Homefulness.

Not to mention that thousands of elders are coldly and violently evicted, due to the viciousness of gentriFUKation, to their death, as POOR Magazine has reported for years. Eviction is Elder Abuse was a campaign POOR Magazine launched and was supported by many other organizations but was shot down by then District Attorney George Gascon.

Finally, our homelessness and our homefulness is absolutely connected to our collective liberation and Mama Earth's decolonization, and this story is a plea to other povertyskolaz and badass organizers to join POOR Magazine in recognizing that homelessness is much deeper than we have been fighting for and so our fight and resistance must be rooted in Mama Earth's beautiful soil. Our guides and our leaders must be First Nations and Indigenous ancestors and their descendents from Huchuin to Palestine from West Papua to Puerto Rico. Together we can UnSell and *Unsettle Mama Earth for her and all of us.* ■

THE STOLEN LAND

You are on Indigenous lands swimming in Indigenous waters looking up at Indigenous skies looking down at Indigenous water creatures There is no part of this place that was not is not cared for loved

Those who are not Indigenous to this land are Settlers

This does not mean being a part of peaceful settlement

It means being a part of settler-colonialism

where invaders came and never left

The land I was born in has been stolen Has anybody seen it? The immigration officer asks: "Nationality and reason for asylum?" I tell him I am looking for the thief of my land Do you think he might be kind and return my stolen land to me?

The land is my Mother, my Mother the Land Your bloodline aches today The secret you spoke of remains no more

Our hearts, they cry of dismay Our brothers before and them before that Felt the brunt of the whiteman's curse And as their blood hit the sun from the whiteman's gun The spirits began to disperse

So we turned to the land, our Mother the Land For comfort, our refuge at last But the feeling was gone, brown children now born Not black like you gave in the past

Please take me back my Mother the Land The white man he'll never accept me

The milk that you part will soothe my heart And your spirit of place will hold me

The enchantment of night around camp firelight With your children black faces smile broadly As they talk of the day, in its original way And the power of the land, so Godly

They talk of your plains and inland rains That send your waters raging And the animals that roam in their hot desert home But your landscape is rapidly changing

You are my Mother, my Mother the Land You provide me for thousands of years But now your soul, like a rock waterhole Is drenched, not from water, but tears

#stolen land

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THANK YOU STREET SPIRIT VENDORS!

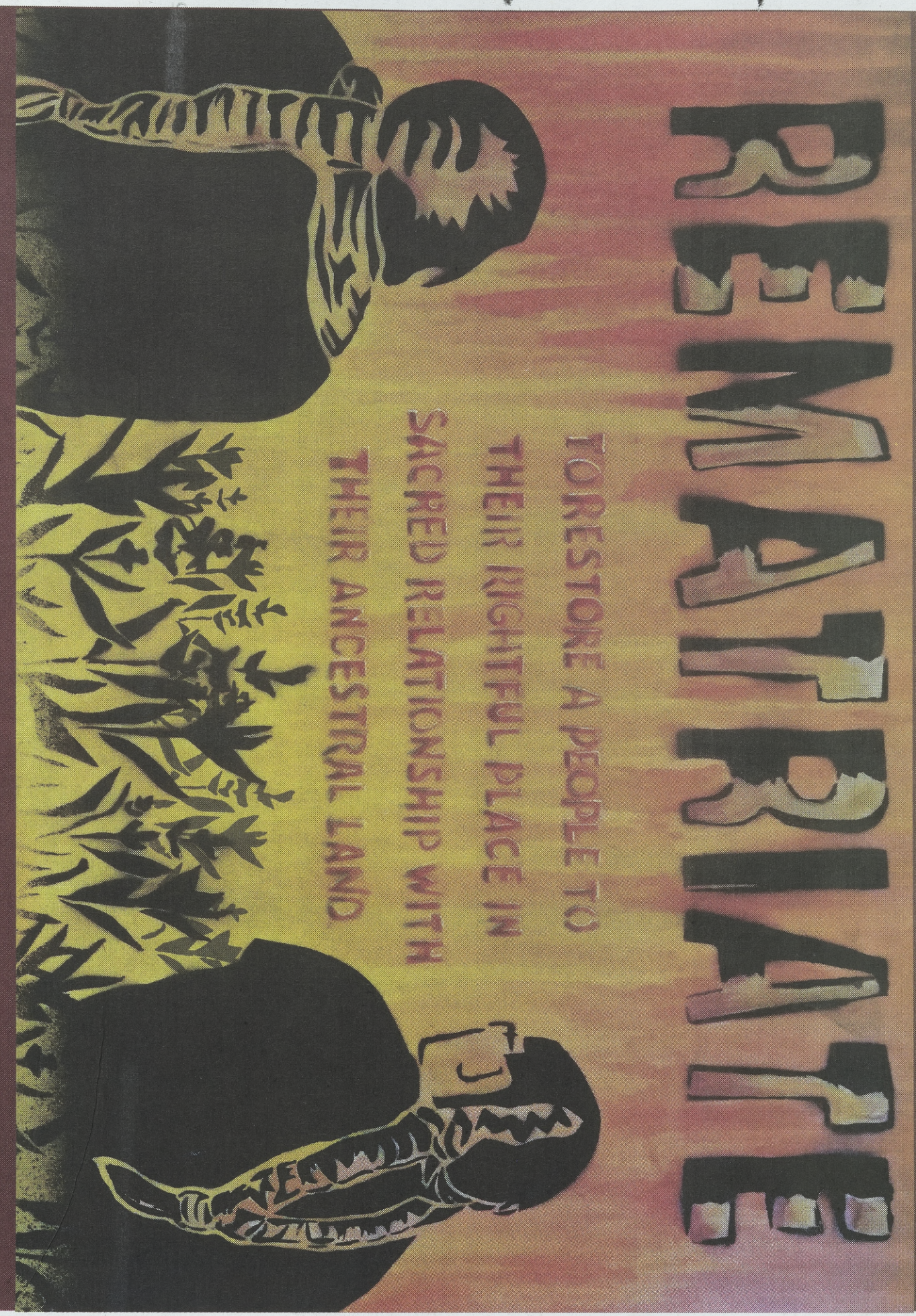
Your presence makes our cities feel more familiar, and fills our streets with love and light. This paper would not exist without you. Thank you:

Van, Joanne, Vernon, Billy, Kevin, Shawn, Ricardo, David F., Curtis, Rhieva, Ronald, Al, Carmen, Melanie, Mike, Rick, Willie, Richard, Jeff A., Venus, Larry, Bishop, David L, Fred, Sharla, Debbie, Gerald, Larry, Travis, Eugene, Sam S., Anthony, Arrous, Barbara, Denise, Harold, Ken W., Roosevelt, James, Tim, Jeff S., Reginald, Chaz, Wylene, Vionla, Jennifer, Jeffery, Bennie, Angelo, Lynn, Christine, Brenda, Ken J., Dwayne, BJ, Martha, Noah, Dwana, Nicole, Muriel, Melody, Russell, Michael, Joe, Leisa, Kendrick, Keith, Martine, Tamela, Andrew, Jeff D., Derrick, Albert, Isaiah, Melvin, Simuel, Cameron, Jeramine, Angel, and Jodonnell.

And to those who have passed on: Alando "Skeet" Williams, Olantis "The Big Man" Livingston, Jeremy Caughlan, Denise Whittle, Arthur Roper, and all other Street Spirit vendors who have passed away without our knowledge.

My Hunt For A Home

by Vernon Dailey

Hello everyone, the saga of Vernon Dailey continues. First of all, I'd like to thank Street Spirit and my readers, customers, friends, and family. By the way, I turn 66 this May 1st and I must say, not only has it been a pleasure working with you all—you guys have shown me nothing but love, kindness, and supported me in my time of need—but I just wanted to let my readers know that I really appreciate you all. There have been some bumps in the road, but together we got over it. My first article was the story of my life. I talked about how I became homeless: that my wife died of cancer, that I couldn't pay all the bills myself, and I lost everything. In my second article I talked about how I received housing in Fairfax, only to become homeless again through housing section 8. My third article was about how some of my customers generously gave me their old car. I'm still homeless but I am not careless. So this is my fourth article. I want to sum it all up in once, and say that the saga still continues. I am very much in need of housing. I'm in different programs, and have been working on finding housing, but this is hard to do. So if you're a millionaire, and have a house you want to donate or a fixer upper…call Vernon: (510) 472-7891. ■

Vernon Dailey is a Street Spirit vendor.